

**Tape #85 (part 2)**  
**Interview with Clayton Schenkelberg**  
**Date: 8/31/08**  
**Interview conducted by Chuck Dunkerly**  
**Transcribed by Jeffrey Rhoten**  
**Checked by**

**Tape #85**

**21:27**

CD: Clayton if we could just start, if you could say and spell your name for the people who are going to transcribe this, so they can-

CS: My name? Clayton Schenkelberg, C-L-A-Y-T-O-N, Shenkelberg, S-C-H-E-N-K-E-L-B-E-R-G.

CD: Thank you. And if you could introduce yourself and tell us where you come from originally, that would be great.

**21:47**

CS: I was born in Iowa, long time ago, long about 1917, which makes me about a little over 90 now. And, my mother died when I was very young. My father was killed when I was in my late teens, and I was sent off to my aunt and uncles, and I saw a sailor in town one day, and I decided I was going to join the service, so I did. I joined the Navy in 1937. And I went to boot camp in San Diego. And then I was shipped to Pearl Harbor in 1937.

**22:31**

CD: Can you tell me how old you were then?

CS: When I joined the service? I was 19. And I had uh, I have three brothers and a sister. After my father was killed, my mother died like I say when I was quite young. They were shipped off to aunts and uncles, and I of course like I say I went to the service. I stayed there for 27 years. And I was in Pearl Harbor-

CD: Just hold on before we, I don't want to jump right to that. Could you tell me what Oahu was like when you got there, what your experience was?

**23:14**

CS: Oh it was great. It was, it was a wonderful place to go, uh wasn't the super highways like they have now, and pretty good liberty town for sailors. And of course later on I met my future wife there, but liberty there, it just great going in. It used to cost a quarter to go from Pearl Harbor into Honolulu by a taxi, 25 cents. I can say I was there in 1937.

CD: Where were you, what was your rank, title, and where were you assigned?

**24:00**

CS: I was a, well I was at the submarine base at the torpedo shop. I was a First Class Torpedoman, and the morning of the 7 I was outside the barracks-

CD: Hold on, I don't want to get to the 7 just quite yet, I have a few other questions leading up to it. What was your normal day like as a torpedoman?

**24:26**

CS: Over all torpedoes, get 'em ready for, cause a torpedo has thousands of parts, and some of 'em you can make 'em run for exercise, because submarines can fire 'em and we can retrieve 'em, or if we put a warhead on 'em we're going for a war shot.

CD: How many, do you remember what you did on the 6 of December?

**25:00**

CS: I had the duty, and Saturday night I had the duty, so I was there at the barracks, and Sunday morning I was right at the base, right outside the barracks.

CD: What did you see and experience on Sunday? What did you do?

**25:24**

CS: We were outside mustering, because you have, if you were had the duty on Saturday, the Sunday crew would come on, but then you stood outside by the flagpole, and you mustered to show that you were still there, and we were out there, oh I'd say about 10 minutes, and we heard a loud explosion, and it was coming from the Navy yard, which was right next to the sub base, and we couldn't figure out what happened. And just about that time here comes this Japanese Zero just over our heads, and we saw the - the meatball on the wing, and we started for the armory. **(26:11)** Heading to the armory to get a gun, because we're meeting, everybody said, "This is war." So we were heading for the armory, and when we did another plane come by and tried to machine gun us, just barely missing. So we got down to the torpedo shop and we all got a rifle and start firing at the planes as they were coming in with rifles.

CD: What was your, did you see any planes go down that day?

**26:49**

CS: I saw one go down, right at the end of the sub base.

CD: Could you describe that?

**26:53**

CS: It was coming in, uh I don't recall now whether it had the torpedo under it or not, but all of a sudden it just nose-dived down into the water. But then we, as we got into the shop we started working on torpedoes, but in the shop there's a... The shop itself had uh, the building also had a personnel office, the supply office, and the admiral office. Admiral Kim's office was there. And in the torpedo shop

was a narrow gauge railway that run into the torpedo shop so we could hall torpedoes, or warheads, or whatever it was. But in the shop was a train that had two flat cars, and on these flat cars was a high explosives, the warheads. I don't recall how many there was, but each one weighed 550 pounds, **(27:50)** high explosives. And of course he come out, and he says, "What happens if we hit a bomb here? The whole base is gonna go." So they asked somebody to take the train out and move it over to what they called magazine island, which is over by supply center. And the fellow that usually run the train, he says, "I'm not going out, there's bombs dropping." Another fellow got real nervous, and he couldn't get it started. I says, "I'll do it," so I did. I got in this train, and engineered the train, and I grabbed a young kid, and I don't remember who he was, and I says, "We might switch once I take this train out." **(28:33)** So I engineered the train with all the high explosives and headed out down along the sub base, and where we make a turn to go up to the island. And just as we got on the turn **(28:44 AUDIO CUTS OUT. Comes in again at 28:50)** ...you're in the open. I just kept going because I was engineering the train,

CD: Hold on for one seconds please...

**28:56**

**END OF TAPE**